

FORTUNES OF FAME

A man in a small village was known for his good advice.

The people respected him until one day it was discovered that the source of his wisdom was a small device which held three stones marked with "yes", "no" and "umm." He was denounced as a charlatan and hounded out of the village. "Anyone can say, 'yes', 'no' and 'umm,'" said the people, "he was a fake and a cheat."

Sadly the man lived out his days alone and when he died he said, "No advice is the best device, and no device is the best advice."

And thus restored his reputation.

-- Beverly Lancaster

New York NY

WILLIAM POWELL WITH CHAINLINK FENCING

William Powell tooling up the drive in his grey Business Coupe. Smoothly he applies the brakes and shifts it into "Park."

The emergency brake makes a tight ratcheting and jolts the car to a complete halt.

Mr. Powell, in somewhat shiny slacks (also grey), slides off the seat, which is trimly upholstered in an unknown fabric; fuzzy flannel or perhaps a drab velvet.

Those boatlike wingtips lightly crunch the gravel.

Moves his paunchy but not unhandsome frame towards the gate.

Crime and irresponsible women are on his mind.

Absently he fumbles with the handle.

When he shuts the gate there is maybe a deep resounding ping and a rippling shudder of the fabric.

The grey Business Coupe is parked less than three feet from the silver expanse of chainlink.